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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER OCI #0966/72
12 Sept 1972Results of 7 September Bahr-Kohl Meeting

West German negotiator Egon Bahr has finally shed some light on his unscheduled talks with his East German counterpart Kohl on 7 September. In a conversation with US Ambassador Hillenbrand on 10 September, Bahr said that his surprise visit to East Berlin had been precipitated by a GDR decision to move ahead immediately in its efforts to gain observer status in the UN. Bahr claimed that he was able to persuade Kohl and "his superiors" to drop the idea on the basis that such a campaign would have a disruptive effect on the inter-German talks.

Bahr also said that during his four-hour meeting with Kohl, the two discussed other issues connected with an inter-German agreement and suggested that some compromises had been worked out that opened the way for completion of the negotiations prior to the West German elections. Bahr added that he would provide the "details" to the allied representatives soon.

Bahr's remarks appear somewhat tendentious. If Pankow (or the Soviets) had made the decision to push for East German observer status at the upcoming UNGA, then nothing Bahr had to say is likely to have altered it. Moreover, his apparent optimism that the East Germans, with "Soviet pressure," were prepared to compromise on the key issues blocking an inter-German treaty, has yet to be substantiated. In any event, we remain largely in the dark about what was said during the 7 September meeting and await with bated breath further illumination from 25X1 Bahr. He meets again with Kohl this Wednesday and Thursday for a regularly scheduled session which may carry us somewhat further.

Czechoslovak Party Draws Fire at Home

Dr. Jiri Luks, principal of a Prague school of economics, has publicly criticized Communist Party organizations for interfering with the work of the Socialist Youth Union (SSM), the national organization responsible for student activities. Writing in the Communist Party's authoritative publication Zivot Strany, Luks assails local party committees for exceeding their authority in assigning tasks to their SSM counterparts

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in the schools. Luks claims that the party committees' activities are weakening the authority of the SSM organizations as an "independent youth organization" and thus are sowing confusion within the schools. He claims that such interference is causing a growing disregard between Communist professors and SSM leaders and that this is one of the symptoms of "alienation of the schools from real life." He calls on the Party to "make an analysis" of its relations with the SSM in order to avoid weakening the educational process.

Luks' article is the first direct criticism of party methods to appear in the Czechoslovak media since Husak's post-Dubcek "normalization" campaign in 1969-70. As such it assumes a "tip of the iceberg" image which probably reflects serious strain between the ubiquitous and domineering Communist Party and the country's administrative organization. The SSM, which after 1969 underwent a complete overhaul and was staffed with new, inexperienced personnel, has no doubt required a great deal of administrative and ideological supervision. The time has apparently come, however, when party influence has become retrogressive in the eyes of many social administrators. The fact that the article appeared in Zivot Strany indicates that some party leaders also think a little "self criticism" of party tactics is in order.

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